

SELECT COMMITTEE ON OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION

MINUTES

FEBRUARY 23, 2023 @ 5:30 PM

ZOOM MEETING

Co-Chairs Richard Shanahan & Joan Merrick opened the meeting at 5:35

Present: Joan Merrick, Richard Shanahan, Peter Basserman, Harry Smith, Heather Wells-Sweeney, Judy Miller

The topic of discussion centered on the 2.09 acre open lot at 379 Brushy Plain Rd which is currently on the market. It is a small, but very important parcel for the town to acquire for the following reasons:

1. It is adjacent to, and would connect, two separate arms of the Pisgah Brook/Saltonstall Preserve.
2. It would provide an alternative route for the Branford Trail. The existing route passes through a perpetually wet and muddy area next to a marsh.
3. It represents an important piece of property that would protect the existing continuity of open space extending from Lake Saltonstall in East Haven, to North Branford, and all the way to Northford Road.
4. The ridge at the top of the property provides views of Lidyhites Pond.
5. It would provide greater and easier public access to the Pisgah Brook Preserve by utilizing the cul-de-sac off of Hilltop Drive created by the rerouting of the road over Snake Hill (The attached Town parcel map is out of date and does not show the current route).
6. It would strengthen the case for having the Town acquire the RWA property on Brushy Plain Road between Lidyhites Pond and Hosley Avenue.

7. It would protect the viewscape from the road for traffic passing on Brushy Plain Rd over Snake Hill

Plan of Action: By unanimous vote of attending committee members, the committee recommends to the First Selectman that the town take steps to purchase the property.

The committee noted that while the property presents a high degree of conservation value, it appears that the current asking price is high. A sizable portion of the lot to the north contains steep slopes and there are established wetlands to the south. In addition, there is a Conservation Easement on the property south of the driveway limiting development in that area. Finding a suitable building location may prove to be difficult and lessen the market value.

Status update regarding RWA property off Brushy Plain Road: While expressing definite interest, the town feels there is no urgency in pursuing a possible purchase at this time.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 pm.